

ABOUT AQUINCUM

North of Rome, Budapest is the only European capital, which presents its Roman heritage to visitors in a large, contiguous area. The Romans reached the Danube around the birth of Christ. Their settlement, Aquincum, covers roughly the area of modern-day Óbuda. The Military Town was located around modern-day Flórián Square, while the Civil Town lay some 2 km away. The remains of the Civil Town can be seen in the Aquincum Museum's Archaeological Park. The stone collection of the museum is one of the richest in Hungary; the artefacts cover the entire course of Roman occupation.

The material remains that tell us about how the Romans lived can be seen at the exhibitions. The artefacts include a unique find of music history: the 3rd-century organ. Its metal parts are the only ones in the world to have survived in entirety and fit for reconstruction.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE MUSEUM

The Archaeological Park of the museum covers almost a third of the former Civil Town and presents the ancient town's forum and its environs: the law court, the large temple, the large public baths and the market hall. Even in their ruins, the signs of the high level of urban culture can be clearly observed: the aqueduct, sewage system, flush toilets and public buildings with running water. The Chronoscope ("past viewing device") is there to help visitors imagine how the former structures would have looked like.

The buildings of the originally village-like settlement were made of timber and clay. These were replaced in the 2nd century by stone buildings. The structure of the settlement by then was laid out according to the conscious principles of urban planning. The town gained the rank of municipium during the reign of Hadrian (probably around 124), and thenceforth functioned as an autonomous administrative unit. The town gained the rank of colonia under Septimius Severus (in 194). Afterwards, at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the town reached its largest extent, the number of its residents is estimated at 10-12 thousand. From the second half of the 4th century the population of the Civil Town gradually declined, and by the 5th century there are only scarce signs of building use. Although during the four centuries of the Roman period the structure and size of the Civil Town changed continuously, its characteristic landmarks – the pillars of the aqueduct, the amphitheatre, and the town wall – could be seen throughout. The Archaeological Park around the museum presents around one-third of the Aquincum Civil Town. The ground plans visible today mostly reflect conditions at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

In the Archaeological Park by the remains of important buildings we placed boards containing the most important details about them.

THE MUSEUM'S STONE COLLECTION

The Lapidarium – one of the largest in Hungary and even Europe (after Italy) – contains stone monuments found in and around Aquincum. The exhibited finds include tombstones, votive and building inscriptions, architectural sculptures and – to a lesser extent – everyday items (e.g. grinding stones). Given the range and quantity of the remains, they are first-class sources

for ancient historians everywhere concerning the history, composition and religion of the local population as well as military history. Most of the sculptural remains in the collection are reliefs from grave monuments (tombstones, sepulchral structures and sarcophagi). These reliefs include busts of the deceased, and scenes with sacrificial or funeral feasts as well as carriages. Tombstones decorated with wreaths form a separate group in Aquincum. The *Lupa Capitolina* (the Capitoline wolf feeding Romulus and Remus) is also depicted on some grave stelae. Plaques depicting mythological scenes were also used for some grave monuments (e.g. Priam plaque). Sarcophagi were also richly decorated (Attius, Genius, Eros, gates of the Underworld etc.). Carvings can also be seen on altars (the snake-motif altar). The collection also holds architectural elements with various designs (e.g. capitals with masks and cornice fragments etc.). Traces of paint can also be observed in various colours on some finds (e.g. the Bitus grave stele). The Aquincum collection of sculptures in the round includes grave sculptures, statues of deities (e.g. Nemesis-Fortuna) and the portraits of emperors and governors etc. These works of art are outstanding examples of sculptures in the Roman Empire and Pannonia. Apart from sculptures carved from local limestone (e.g. the portrait of Marcus Aurelius), the collection also includes imported sculptures carved from marble (e.g. the governor's torso). The sculptures in the collection date to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

THE MUSEUM'S EXHIBITIONS

Venue: Exhibition building (1031 Budapest, Szentendrei út 135.)

On the ground floor:

AQUINCUM VISIBLE STORAGE

The storerooms of the Budapest History Museum hold one of the largest archaeological collections in Hungary. From prehistoric times to the Migration Period, over one million archaeological finds from the Hungarian capital are kept at the Aquincum Museum. Following the refurbishment of the new exhibition building in 2007-2008, the Visible Storage opened with the purpose of presenting as much as possible of the vast, internationally-recognised collection, which had previously been difficult to access for professionals and visitors alike.

The Aquincum Visible Storage tells the history of Budapest and Aquincum through the chronological and thematic display of archaeological finds from prehistoric times to the Hungarian conquest. The exhibition invites visitors to wander in and explore the fascinating world of the Aquincum Museum's storerooms. Given the size of the hall, the exhibition displays some 1,200 objects.

The inner layout of the Visible Storage allows for the materials presented from the storage to be changed from time to time, and the finds – swiftly growing in number thanks to the archaeological excavations of the Budapest History Museum – to be shown as quickly as possible to the public.

On the upper floor:

ROME IN AQUINCUM – permanent exhibition

THE AQUINCUM ORGAN

As part of the Rome in Aquincum exhibition, we can present in a worthy setting, more than 75 years after its discovery, our world-famous relic of music history, the Aquincum organ. The remains of the instrument were discovered during the construction of the same building in which the extant parts of the organ are displayed, along with a reconstruction of its structure and mechanism as well as the organ's reconstructed working copy.

In AD 228, Gaius Julius Viatorinus, a prominent official of the Aquincum Civil Town presented a portable organ to the collegium of textile-dealers. The craftsmen and merchants of the town joined such associations (collegia) based on their occupations. The collegia carried out public services (e.g. maintenance of the aqueduct or fire fighting). It was also their duty to provide burial assistance to their members and to maintain the cult of the deceased. The hall of the association of textile-dealers (collegium centonariorum) was located within the town walls, next to the southern gate of the Aquincum Civil Town (where the new exhibition building of the museum now stands). The instrument donated by the Aquincum dignitary was kept there, and it could have been played during festivities. We have descriptions of organs from Antiquity by Vitruvius and Heron. Based on these, too, it is certain that the Aquincum organ was small and portable by hand. The organ was probably built using wood, leather and metals (bronze, copper); it had altogether 52 pipes in 4 rows, with 13 pipes in each row. The way the hydra was operated is still the subject of debate, since, although its name in Latin indicates an organ operated by water, according to some it was operated by air instead.

In the mid-3rd century a fire ravaged the Civil Town, destroying, among others, the headquarters of the firemen. The organ fell into the basement beneath its place of storage and was buried by the collapsing debris.

During foundation work for the Electricity Company's converter station, the ruins of the hall were found and within it the remains of the organ. In 1931, the excavating archaeologist, Lajos Nagy, found nearly 400 intact and fragmentary pieces of the organ. During the Second World War, unfortunately numerous pieces were lost, and so barely 300 pieces remain.

The Hall of the Organ also displays the sarcophagus of the Aquincum singer and organ player Aelia Sabina. The monitors on the walls present the coverage of the Aquincum organ's discovery, and the depiction of organs and other ancient instruments on Aquincum finds.

THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE

The exhibition Rome in Aquincum presents previously hidden treasures from the rich collections of the museum, which previously could not be exhibited in a worthy setting.

In AD 106, the Emperor Trajan divided Pannonia into two: Lower and Upper Pannonia, and Aquincum became the provincial seat of Lower Pannonia, and the seat of the governor. The first governor at Aquincum was Hadrian, who later would also become emperor. Some

ascribe to him the construction of the governor's palace in Aquincum, which stood on modern-day Hajógyári Island.

Evoking the former splendour of the Governor's residence, Rome in Aquincum displays some of the palace's previously unexhibited and recently restored mosaics, as well as wall paintings, the – in many cases – monumental statues from the palace shrines and reconstructions of a fountain and an ornamental stone vessel, testaments to the once luxurious furnishing of the building. Rome in Aquincum also displays a selection of luxury items: imported bronze, glass and ceramic vessels as well as gold and silver jewellery – samples from the daily life of the governor and those around him.